

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SINGAP 02108 110716Z
ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 INSE-00 AID-05
VO-05 CA-01 CIAE-00 SSO-00 /052 W
-----067784 110721Z /14

O R 110630Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 245
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE
USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 2108

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF
SUBJ: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES ABOARD SHIP "REGENSTEIN"

REF: A. STATE 119065, B. SINGAPORE 2096, C. GENEVA 7131

1. UNHCR REP CARPENTER PHONED DCM LATE MORNING MAY 11 RE INDOCHINESE REFUGEES ABOARD "REGENSTEIN". ACCORDING TO CARPENTER, VESSEL'S OWNERS HAD INSTRUCTED CAPTAIN TO LEAVE SINGAPORE TONIGHT (MAY 11) AND SAIL TO VIETNAM TO RETURN REFUGEES. CAPTAIN HAS REQUESTED CLEARANCE FROM SINGAPORE PORT AUTHORITY TO DEPART SINGAPORE AND, IF CLEARANCE GRANTED, PLANS DEPART 6/7:00 PM TONIGHT. CARPENTER HAS INFORMED BRITISH, FRENCH AND GERMAN MISSIONS OF FOREGOING AS WELL AS SINGAPORE FOREIGN MINISTRY.

2. CARPENTER REPORTED THAT GERMAN FIRM WHICH HAD CHARTERED
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SINGAP 02108 110716Z

VESSEL WAS DENYING ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR REFUGEES ON TECHNICAL/
LEGAL GROUNDS THAT FIRM'S RESPONSIBILITIES EXTENDED ONLY TO CARGO
NOT TO VESSEL ITSELF.

3. CARPENTER SEES SINGAPOREAN REACTION AS CRUCIAL,
AND HOLDS TO BELIEF THAT GOS IS UNLIKELY TO PERMIT
RETURN OF REFUGEES TO VIETNAM BOTH ON HUMANITARIAN

GROUND'S AND IN RECOGNITION OF ADVERSE WORLDWIDE PUBLICITY THAT THIS WOULD GENERATE. SINGAPOREANS HAVE TOLD HIM THAT THEY ARE STILL STUDYING UNHCR' CABLE TO PRIME MIN LEE AND ARE UNABLE AS YET TO ADVISE HIM WHAT RESPONSE MAY BE. CARPENTER FEELS ONE GOOD POSSIBILITY IS THAT GOS WILL DENY VESSEL PERMISSION TO DEPART THIS EVENING, BUYING MORE TIME TO CONSIDER COURSES OF ACTION.

4. DCM TOLD CARPENTER THAT WE WERE DEEPLY INTERESTED IN FATE OF REFUGEES AND ASKED THAT HE KEEP US CLOSELY INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL WE BE ADVISED BEFORE FINAL STEPS WERE TAKEN FOR VESSEL'S DEPARTURE FROM SINGAPORE. CARPENTER AGREED TO KEEP EMBASSY INFORMED OF ALL DEVELOPMENTS. DCM DID NOT REVEAL TO CARPENTER THAT EMBASSY HAD STANDBY AUTHORITY TO GUARANTEE RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES IF NECESSARY TO PREVENT THEIR RETURN TO VIETNAM.

5. EMBASSY COMMENT: WE EXPECT TO GO DOWN TO THE WIRE ON THIS CASE IN HOPES THAT EITHER SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT OR ONE OF OTHER MISSIONS WILL TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT REFUGEES FROM LEAVING SINGAPORE ABOARD VESSEL. IF NO ACTION MATERIALIZES. AS LAST RESORT WE WILL FURNISH GUARANTEES.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SINGAP 02108 110716Z

6. "REGENSTEIN'S" SINGAPORE AGENT HAS PROVIDED EMBASSY COPY OF CABLE FROM ZODIAC MARITIME AGENCY IN LONDON TO VESSEL'S CAPTAIN. TEXT OF MESSAGE AS FOLLOWS:

QUOTE. WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT THE SITUATION AT THE MOMENT, 6 DAYS AFTER YOUR ARRIVAL SINGAPORE, HAVING SAVED THE LIVES OF 64 MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN AND BABIES, YOUR OWNERS CAME TO A DEADLOCK BY WHICH THEY REALIZE THAT THERE IS NOBODY IN THE WORLD WHO IS READY TO HELP AND TAKE THESE POOR REFUGEES FROM YOUR SHIP.

AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE APPLIED THROUGH VARIOUS CONTACTS TO MOST OF THE NATIONS IN THE WORLD, AS WELL AS TO THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES, ASSISTANCE DIVISION, GENEVA (WHOSE REPRESENTATIVE IN YOUR AREA IS MR. CARPENTER), AND WHO SAY NICE WORDS OF APPRECIATION BUT NO PRACTICAL SOLUTION WAS GIVEN IN ORDER TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM, AND EVEN TODAY WE LEARNED FROM MESSRS. HAPAG-LLOYD THAT THEY WERE NOT READY TO SUPPLY BLANKETS TO THE SHIP, AND THEY HAVE INFORMED ACCORDINGLY TO THE CHARTERERS REPRESENTATIVE WHO PROVIDED \$500 TO BUY SUCH BLANKETS FOR THE REFUGEES.

THE OWNERS, WITH ALL THE SYMPATHY TO THE QUESTION OF THE

VIETNAMESE REFUGEES, SEE NO SOLUTION WHICH CAN SAVE THEM FROM
HUGE LOSSES BY VESSEL LYING IDLE IN THE PORT OF
SINGAPORE, AS WELL AS BY TAKING CARE OF THE DELICATE CARGO ON
BOARD THE VESSEL, AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE FACT THAT THE
WHOLE WORLD SHUT ITS EYES TO THIS PROBLEM AND EXPECTS THAT THE
INDIVIDUAL OWNER WILL TAKE SAME UPON ITS SHOULDER, AND, REGRET-
FULLY, ARE HEREBY INSTRUCTING YOU TO START AND MAKE THE NECESSARY
PREPARATION FOR YOUR SAILING BACK TO VIETNAM IN ORDER TO LAND
THE REFUGEES ON BOARD IN VIETNAM WHERE, IT WAS ASSURED TO US
VERBALLY BY MR. SOEPRATO WHO IS THE PERSON IN THE UNITED
NATIONS WHO DEALS WITH YOUR VESSEL THAT THEY WILL NOT BE
EXECUTED.

WE ARE WAITING FOR YOUR CONFIRMATION THAT THE SHIP IS
READY FOR SAILING TOMORROW 9/5. UNQUOTE.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 SINGAP 02108 110716Z

HOLDRIDGE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES, SHIPS, SEA RESCUES, SHIP MOVEMENTS, REGENSTEIN
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 may 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SINGAP02108
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780199-0918
Format: TEL
From: SINGAPORE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780569/aaaacghs.tel
Line Count: 137
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e5118ea0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION HA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: 78 STATE 119065, 78 SINGAPORE 2096, 78 GENEVA 7131
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2719282
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES ABOARD SHIP \"REGENSTEIN\"
TAGS: SREF, SN, VM
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e5118ea0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014